1: Honigmann E-5 (1943-1945) 1949 ND12 Nahane ND12

535 rarely is there any conversation between the couple. When the music has stopped, the girl turns swiftly and returns to her place while the man joins his friends across the room or else stands outside the building until the next number is begun. Sometimes women too go outside. Men frequently dance while wearing their hats and, unless it is very warm, girls continue to wear their coats. Both sexes often dance holding an unfinished cigarette in their hands. In form, Kaska dancing may be described as a one-step, but some men in leading proceed in a monotonous walk-like step that has earned the soldiers' approbation, "Lower Post shuffle." The Tahltan do a square dance, but few Kaska Indians know this form. Waltzes are rarely played and are not well danced. White trappers when intoxicated are fond of introducing a variant of the one step. Calling, "woodpecker!" they execute the step by banging the heels forcefully on the floor instead of shuffling. Intoxicated young Indian men sometimes dance in this manner, and drunken musicians create considerable amusement by speeding up the tempo of playing, forcing everyone to dance rapidly. Occasionally a white man will fiddle for a dance. His playing is slower than the Indians' and he frequently interchanges the one step with waltzes, schottisches, and polkas to which the natives do not dance confidently.

[273] [570] One of the primary sources of enjoyment in dancing comes from the movement and rhythm. There are, however, other functions of a dance which contribute to its popularity. The first of these is the excitement which, even without the aid of alcohol, serves to break down the emotional remoteness of the people and, like the gambling games, leads to some of the most intensive social interaction in the society. Dances are also popular because they [832] are among the few situations facilitating sexual interaction. Soldiers and civilian construction workers employed on the Alaska Highway recognized this function and often utilized dances to recruit Indian girls for sexual purposes. Complaints by traders and missionaries led the provincial and Mounted Police to pay surprise visits to dances and order out of town all strangers found there. Indian dances are also visited by the police to detect evidence of [856] drinking. Dances found in progress after midnight, Saturday, are ordered closed under the terms of a provincial law forbidding Sunday dancing.

525 *Gambling.* In contrast to dancing, not much time is spent in gambling. Card games, such as poker and blackjack, are played during the summer and winter but are emotionally less intense than the stick games, which take place for a few consecutive nights each summer. When interest has been aroused in such a game, someone proposes that it be played and word travels through the community. Gradually people make their way to the designated spot. Gambling generally takes place some distance from town, since experience has taught the Indians that the resident missionary and traders are likely to be displeased if kept awake by the sound of the drumming.

In preparation for gambling someone first cuts eleven tally sticks from green willow branches. These sticks, each about a foot long, are peeled and one end sharpened so that they can be thrust into the ground. The next task is to choose two sides. This is done informally, but the man who is most prominent in the choosing becomes the captain of his team. Each team usually contains an even number of men—from four to six. A youth is then [534] designated to manage the "drum," which may consist of a frying pan, a four gallon oil tin, or a tambourine drum specially prepared for gambling. The drum stick is a plain piece of thick willow.

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A fire is made and a large amount of dry wood collected. Facing each other, each team kneels on a blanket at opposite sides of the fire. The drummer places himself to one side of the blaze while the spectators crowd opposite him or stand behind the players. Before the game begins each player selects, or is suggested, an opponent from the opposite team with whom he bets. All players generally bet the same sum—generally twenty-five cents a game. It is then decided which side shall open the playing, and all of the tally sticks are thrown across the fire to this team, which we will designate as the guessing team. The opposing side will be referred to as the playing team.

When the guessing team is ready, the drummer moves behind the line of playing men and begins the gambling rhythm, a staccato six-eight beat. Each man on the playing team holds a coin in his hand. Drawing the blanket over the knees, the men on this side bend low, hands under the blanket and, bobbing their bodies up and down to the beat of the drum, individually decide in which hand to secret the coin. When all are ready they straighten up, kneeling and holding up clenched fists. Their bodies and arms continue to bob to the drummer's rhythm. Most of the players also accompany the drum by chanting "tš-tš, tš-tš, tš-tš" in the same time. The captain on the guessing team is now required to guess in what hand his opponents carry the token. This is done in certain conventionalized gestures and without words. Once the captain has pointed out his decision, the players must reveal their hands. This is done swiftly, without the swaying bodies once losing the rhythm of the drum. The open hand is exultantly flung out with obvious glee to show that the guesser has missed, and the coin is then quickly slapped into the open palm of the exposed hand as the lucky player gets ready to play again. Everything counts on swiftness, and the captain must be quick to note how many men he has "killed"—that is, how many he has guessed correctly—and to remember how the others played so as to anticipate their next move. Then for each person left in the game, the captain (or his neighbor) throws a tally stick across the fire. The playing team does not wait for this signal, but is already busy continuing the round. Again the hands come up and the captain, trying to estimate what his opponents will have done this time, claps his hands and points. Swiftly he is shown his failure. More of the tally sticks go across the fire. The longer a side can outwit the guesser, the greater the excitement and the more exultant the triumph of the winners. Those who have been defeated, however, kneel quietly next to their playing team mates. Eventually the guesser will have succeeded in eliminating all of the opponents and the first round of the game is over. In the second round the original guessing side hides the coins; the drummer now stands behind these men and the captain on the other team acts as the guesser. The success of a man as a guesser can be estimated by the number of tally sticks which his side is able to retain in the course of eliminating the playing side. If the process takes eight or nine sticks, the original guessing side is manifestly at a disadvantage when it *is* their turn to play. A game is won by the side which first secures all the tally sticks. With no sticks to play, the losers now pay the forfeit previously agreed on and a new game is begun.

Often the game is immediately continued after a side has won all the tally sticks. When this is to be done the captain of the winning side calls "Twenty-one!" One round only is played in twenty-one. The number of sticks won in this round is subtracted from the total number of sticks and the remainder thrown across to the losing side. The sticks won in twenty-one are the handicap against which the losing side starts guessing in the next game.

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525 The outstanding features of gambling games are swiftness, excitement, and movement. The aim is to confuse the guesser by as much distraction as possible. Intense emotion is concentrated in the playing and the rests between games, when losers throw over their forfeits, are very welcome. These rests are often prolonged when a winner fails to catch his forfeit and must hunt for it in the grass, or when a winner has to give his opponent change for a bill. If a man loses and has no money to pay his bet, he may continue playing and owe his opponent the losses. White men who gamble are often confused by the custom of a man temporarily leaving the game to rest, eat, or urinate. Nobody represents him on his team but, unless he clearly indicates that he is "through," the absentee player continues to participate in the winnings or losses of his side and is obliged to pay his forfeits or entitled to collect his winnings.

Confident players can afford to burlesque while they are hiding, particularly if they are playing against a naive captain. Louis Maza, for example, after withdrawing his hands from below the blanket, provocatively stretched one fist toward the fire, placing the other behind his back. As was obviously expected, the captain indicated the hidden hand. Triumphantly Louis displayed the token in the outstretched hand. Sometimes games become contests between two dominant personalities who enjoy reputations as capable players, as when Louis Maza played against Nick Lang, each being captain of one team. Repeatedly both of these men would kill everyone on the other side but the opposing captain, and the game would continue with one captain matching his wits against the other. The swiftness of the game facilitates cheating, and sometimes games break up with considerable hard feeling as one side accuses the other of unfair playing. In general, the Indians are not good losers and resentment often makes its appearance in the form of nagging and muffled derogatory remarks concerning the opponents. It is obvious that the game is not played for the financial stakes but rather for the excitement and pleasure which the gambling promotes.

LIFE CYCLE

Birth and Infancy

844 Although in 1945 one woman, Dorothy Plover, gave birth to a son in the hospital at Whitehorse, most women continue to bear children without white medical assistance. Whenever possible an attempt is made to keep the expectant mother in a winter settlement where experienced female help will be available to assist in delivery and postnatal care. This assistance is not always possible, however, and sometimes (especially if birth is premature) an older woman is forced to deliver her own child or is assisted by her white husband. [759] No case was heard of an Indian man aiding parturition. During the summer at Lower Post, a mature woman is generally called upon when labor becomes severe. The duration of labor noted was from three to nine hours, the latter for a fourth pregnancy.

Delivery is with the parturient in a sitting position. The cord is cut with scissors, and mother and child are then washed with warm water. The baby, its legs laid straight, is wrapped in blankets with the hands bound to its sides and placed in bed next to the mother. [845] The afterbirth is thrown far away in the bush or may be hung in a tree. No special precautions are taken with premature babies.

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that sometimes dugouts engaged in such contests.[28] People played many games including blind man's bluff, which involved covering the eyes of a player with tanned skin while five or six other participants circled the blindfolded person, who sought to capture them. Both sexes of all ages played hide and seek. Sometimes an object was hidden and its discovery became the object of the game. With a raw skin available children initiated the game of drag-skin, jumping on the skin and trying to hold it back by their weight as it was being drawn by an older person. String figures called for a certain amount of skill to construct designs like a duck, crow, feet, and conical lodge from a length of tanned-skin line. Rope jumping and rope tug-of-war did not come into popularity until contact, and pole tug-of-war, skin-tossing, as well as snapping sticks, could not be recalled as amusement devices. Shamans may have used snapping sticks as part of the curing ritual. Story telling possessed educative value and constituted the pleasant responsibility of old men. A story teller might insist that the audience look him directly in the eyes. Should a young person shift his glance he would be reprimanded by the narrator remarking, "You won't be smart."[29] Private ownership did not extend to folk tales.

Gambling occurred in summer, when a number of family bands gathered together and the weather allowed players to assemble around an outdoor fire. The stick game, of which several alternative forms existed, furnished the most popular medium for betting.[30] Since the pattern of this game has already been described for the Kaska[29] the details will not be repeated here. Mainly the game took place at night, illumination coming from a well-tended fire located between the double line of kneeling players. A steady drumming furnished rhythm to which the gamblers moved hands and body as they challenged the opponents to guess in which hand the wooden token lay concealed. Women as well as men played the stick game but the sexes never competed in the same game. Forfeits consisted of whatever valuables a man chose to offer. Sometimes after playing most of the night a man lost all his resources. With the gambling fever still possessing him he might in the end bet his wife. Should he lose his bet the woman remained with the winner for two or three days before returning to her husband. Marriages rarely broke up as a result of this custom. Sometimes an old man, fearing that the woman would become accustomed to the other man, went to the winner's camp and urged the latter to send her back.

Feasts marked a number of points on the life cycle. Thus parents celebrated the birth

[28] The Tlingit organized three- to four-mile races, run by from three to five canoes. Jones, *Study of the Thlingets of Alaska* (1914), 81.

[29] A Tahltan informant, Beal Carlick, said that among his people a grandfather told many stories about fighting, murder, and warfare. Such deeds were explained as resulting from the evil nature of some men and the craziness of some women. "This was just like school, educate us so we don't lie, don't steal." Stories also possessed entertainment value and filled evenings when there was nothing else to do. "Sit down, listen, don't run around anymore," the informant said.

[30] Stick games were also a favorite form of gambling among the Tlingit. Swanton, *Social Condition, Beliefs and Linguistic Relationship of the Tlingit Indians* (1908), 443–444; Jones, *Study of the Thlingets of Alaska* (1914), 122–123.

[29] Honigmann, *Culture and Ethos of Kaska Society* (1949), 174–175.

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coal. Other masks came from the head skins of black and grizzly bears, the goat, and sheep.

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Potlatches were accompanied by games and sports, some of which included competitions between teams recruited from opposite moieties. Popular sports including racing, tugs-of-war, blind-man's bluff, wrestling, target shooting, throwing, and gambling. Races took place between men, the end of a course sometimes being marked by the prize that would become the property of the winner. Thus an arrow thrust into a tree would be pulled out by the first contestant to reach the objective. Two spruce bark traveling canoes also raced, each containing a team selected on moiety lines. The winning team claimed the rival vessel as their prize. Three or four men engaged in swimming races, often to see who could cross a river quickest. Tugs-of-war also occurred between moieties. Customarily some boiled meat piled on one side of the playing ground constituted the prize of the winning side. The Kaska, one concludes, did not enjoy sport for its own sake but preferred to compete for some tangible reward. Men and women engaged in tugs-of-war, the sport being played with lines as well as with poles. Poles in turn were both pushed and pulled. Blind-man's-bluff found favor with children and adults. In this game one of the contestants had his eyes bound with caribou hide. Moving with outstretched arms toward the sound cues of the other participants he sought to grasp somebody's coat or arm. In a variety of this game a blindfolded individual sought to secure a marten skin hung in a tree. Success earned him the right to keep the prize. Wrestling matches endured for several hours, for as one contestant was overcome another stepped from the circle of onlookers to challenge the victor. Each defeated challenger paid the victor in moccasins, a bow, or an arrow. Wrestling for women was denied [171] but the informant, in typical fashion, remarked having heard of the practice among the Espatotena and "Mackenzie River Indians." Shooting with bow and arrows for a mark on a tree or toward some other target rarely involved a prize. Sticks were also flung 525 across snow (snow scaling?) to see how far one could hit. Skin tossing and drag-skin 533 games could not be recalled. People keenly relished gambling in the form of the stick game. Teams consisted of from five to ten men each. Instead of playing with the hands under a robe the contestants held their arms behind the back while they shuffled the pointed wooden token. Two drummers accompanied the players and simultaneously chanted "hō, hō, hō, hō." Should drums be unavailable the players themselves chanted in a moderately fast, double rhythm, six-eights time: "ha-ha, hu-hi, hi-ha, hu-hi."

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Through feasts the Indians celebrated a youth's first successful hunt for large game, a girl's return from her initial menstrual seclusion, and a youth's completion of his dream quest. Sometimes the feasts became potlatches. No mortuary feast took place but a "remembrance" potlatch occurred about one year after death. Potlatches were exchanged between moieties and followed a period of gift solicitation. Objects given to a potlatcher constituted outright gifts for the festival from which, in turn, all the givers derived prestige. The contributors received gifts when the opposite moiety repaid the potlatch. Only rich men provided a potlatch, their poorer fellows being unable to accumulate sufficient food or objects for such an undertaking. Clowning and masked dancing enlivened the give-away but nobody recalled the use of ceremonial wigs.